

PETITION

OF

CITIZENS OF MAINE AND MASSACHUSETTS,

PRAYING

*That lumber manufactured in New Brunswick, from timber grown in Maine, may be admitted into the United States free of duty.*

MARCH 22, 1848.

Referred to the Committee on Finance, and ordered to be printed.

*To the Congress of the United States, in session at Washington, A. D. 1847 and 1848.*

The undersigned, citizens of Maine and Massachusetts, would respectfully represent, that by the treaty of Washington with Great Britain it is provided, in substance, that all the produce of the forest in logs, lumber, timber, boards, staves, or shingles, grown in any of those parts of the State of Maine watered by the river Saint John or its tributaries, shall have free access into and through said river and its said tributaries, having their source within the State of Maine, to and from the seaport at the mouth of the said river Saint John, and to and around the falls of said river, either by boats, rafts, or other conveyance.

The controlling motive which actuated the two governments in making this arrangement is expressed in the treaty to be "in order to promote the interest and encourage the industry of all the inhabitants of the countries watered by the river Saint John and its tributaries." The right of passage to the sea having thus been secured for the lumber of Maine, which could in no other way reach a market, it becomes highly important to have the rights of the owners, being citizens of the United States, in relation to continuing the transit from the port of Saint John to the United States, clearly defined and settled.

We beg leave to state that the said lumber in the extensive territory watered by the Saint John and the Aroostook, and their tributaries, within the State of Maine, must all be run down said river Saint John to its mouth, and there is no other way but this passage through a foreign territory to bring said timber into an American or any other market. On the American territory there is no sufficient water-power to manufacture to any extent, there being no such power on the principal rivers, the Saint John and Aroostook; and the Grand Falls on both rivers are within the province of New Brunswick, and are of such character that it is impossible to run anything over them but rough logs and timber.

It is therefore absolutely necessary for American citizens owning or interested in the lands or timber on said waters, in the State of Maine, in order to avail themselves of a favorable market for the produce of the forest, to build mills and machinery at some point within the province of New Brunswick, at or near the port of shipment, Saint John, for the purpose of putting said lumber in proper state for shipment to the United States, without which market the lumber is of little value.

A construction has been given to the laws of the United States, by which a duty is exacted upon all said lumber except unhewn timber, or lumber manufactured within the American territory, when the same is brought into the ports of the United States: under this construction, the duty amounting to a prohibition, or nearly so, no revenue accrues to government. And it seems to us unreasonable that timber the growth of American soil should lose its American character and privileges merely from the fact that it must necessarily be sawed within the province of New Brunswick, in order to convey it to ports in the United States. If this is to be regarded as the true construction of the treaty, and of the laws now in force, the undersigned pray that the laws may be so modified or explained, that hereafter all such lumber in boards, planks, scantling, timber hewn and sawed, shingles, clapboards, or other form of lumber manufactured or made from the timber described in the treaty, grown on the territory of Maine and transported down said river, and manufactured in Maine or New Brunswick, and shipped in American bottoms, may be admitted into the ports of the United States free of duty, provided the certificate of the United States consul of said port of Saint John, of the facts aforesaid, shall accompany each cargo.

In view of the whole matter, and the peculiar necessities of transportation, the undersigned cannot doubt that the Congress of the United States, having in view the interest of the whole country and the rights of the parties interested, will without hesitation grant the prayer of this petition.

D. W. BRADLEY.

LEONARD MARCH.

D. B. HINCKLEY.

THOMAS N. EGERY.

NATHANIEL BLAKE.

G. L. BOYNTON.

GEORGE K. JEWETT.

COFFINS WELD.

EDWARD BATES.

CHANDLER, HOWARD & Co.